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**JEMAAH ISLAMIYAH: LESSONS FROM COMBATING ISLAMIST TERRORISM IN  
INDONESIA**

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## **Abstract**

Indonesia practices a unique form of syncretic Islam that embraces tolerance and pluralism, leading to a moderate form of Islam that provides a degree of resistance to radicalization. This version of Islam contrasts with the dominant policy of Saudi Arabia and some neighboring states which impose strict, conservative, and puritanical social practices. Religious doctrines of intolerance toward western values, mysticism, and variations in local practice have spread to Islamic communities in Indonesia, where terrorist groups like Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) have used these doctrines as a base of justification for a radicalized ideology that seeks to overthrow the state. JI seeks to create an Islamic government based on *shari'a* in Indonesia. Despite the severity of the challenge from this radical ideology promoted through violence, Indonesia has experienced relative success in conducting a counter-terrorism campaign against JI. Indonesia employs both counter-terrorism police work and effective messaging to exploit the key differences between Indonesian and Middle Eastern radical Islam. The Indonesian government's fight against JI provides a model for a successful campaign to combat a terrorist group using police tactics, intelligence, and re-education. However, the Indonesian government faces challenges exporting this model of resistance to radicalism back to the Middle East and North Africa because it requires supportive political conditions that remain absent in many other countries.

## **JEMAAH ISLAMIYAH: LESSONS FROM COMBATING ISLAMIST TERRORISM IN INDONESIA**

In January 2016, terrorists targeted a major shopping district in Jakarta, Indonesia. This attack recalls memories of Jemaah Islamiyah's (JI) attacks, ranging from the Bali bombings in 2002 through the bombing of the Ritz-Carlton and Marriott hotels in 2009. However, this new attack lacked the sophistication and deadliness of JI's attacks, and the Islamic State (IS) claimed responsibility for this attack. Although Islamist terrorism holds deep roots in Indonesia, JI does have ties with al-Qaeda; and more recently, JI's former leaders have pledged allegiance to IS. The story of Indonesia's struggle against extremism potentially offers insight for other states seeking effective strategies in their counter-radicalism campaigns.

Historically, Muslims in Indonesia have practiced a unique form of Islam that embraces tolerance and pluralism. Outside observers tend to call this a “moderate” form of Islam and note that it provides a degree of resistance to radicalization. Indonesian Islam, therefore, differs distinctly from the strict puritanical practices promoted by missionaries sent from Saudi Arabia over the last 70 years, commonly known as *Wahhabism* and *Salafism*. The current government of Saudi Arabia took power and conquered Mecca and Medina as a result of an alliance between the al Saud family and the followers of Mohammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab (1703 – 1792). Wahhab preached a very literalist form of Islam purified from practices he called innovations and polytheism. Therefore, outside observers call the Saudi state ideology *Wahhabism*. It shares many characteristics with a similarly regressive doctrine developed in Egypt by groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood and intellectuals such as Sayyid Qutb. This doctrine advocates that Muslims imitate the way of life of the first three generations of Muslims, known as the noble

ancestors, or *Salaf*. Therefore, observers often call the doctrine *Salafi*. Because both *Wahhabi* and *Salafi* doctrines reject the traditional practices and common beliefs of large sections of the global Islamic community, other Muslims call them “intolerant.”

As these doctrines based on principles of intolerance spread to Islamic communities in Indonesia, groups such as JI adopted these ideas to justify attempts to take over the state through violence. Hereafter, such justifications represent “radicalism” whether individuals act on these beliefs or not.<sup>1</sup> JI seeks to create an Islamic government based on *shari'a* in Indonesia.

Moderate Indonesian Muslim organizations, however, like *Nahdlatul Ulama* (NU) and *Muhammadiyah* preach tolerance and provide a counter-message to the narrowly construed teachings of *Wahhabi* and *Salafi* ideologies. Despite JI's radical ideology and violent methods, Indonesia has experienced relative success in conducting a counter-terrorism campaign against JI using counter-terrorism police work and effective messaging to exploit the key differences in cultural values and the forms of Islamic practice promoted by missionaries from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf. The Indonesian government's fight against JI offers a model of a successful campaign to combat a terrorist group using police tactics, intelligence, and re-education. However, the Indonesian government faces challenges exporting this model of resistance to radicalism back to the Middle East and North Africa because it requires supportive political conditions that remain absent in many other countries.

More than 200 million Muslims reside in Indonesia, representing 13 percent of the world's Muslim population.<sup>2</sup> A large majority of this population accepts secular government, but an extreme faction does exist. JI represents one of these extremist groups, seeking to create an Islamic state in Indonesia and to implement *shari'a*. They advocate the use of violence and terrorism to achieve their goals. The doctrines of intolerance that JI has adopted coupled with

their desire to overthrow the Indonesian government through violence contrast starkly with the version of Islam that most Indonesian Muslims practice.

Indonesian Muslims practice a unique, syncretic version of Islam, which creates a different and challenging political environment for groups such as JI, who employ terrorism to impose their version of Islamist governance. The history of the spread of Islam throughout Indonesia provides context for understanding how Indonesian Islam formed within the existing cultures and religions. As Taylor writes in his preface to *The Illusion of an Islamic State*, as Islam spread in the 16<sup>th</sup> century on Java, Muslim city-states conquered the old Buddhist and Hindu kingdoms.<sup>3</sup> However, indigenous Javanese opposed them and sought common ground between Islam and the old religions based on tolerance and mysticism.<sup>4</sup> *Sufism*, a form of Islamic mysticism, also played heavily in the formation of Indonesia's version of Islam. *Sufism* reveres the nine saints, or the *Wali Songo*, who are credited with spreading Islam throughout the archipelago. The resulting Indonesian version of Islam draws on Hindu and Buddhist influences and Javanese culture, in addition to principles of the Islamic faith. This syncretistic approach leads to the tolerant characteristics found in Indonesian government and society toward other faiths and the separation of religion from politics.

*Wahhabi* ideology and doctrine first arrived in Indonesia in the 1800s, brought by *hajjis* returning from their pilgrimage to Mecca. As one of the pillars of Islam, Muslims accept the duty of making a pilgrimage, or *hajj*, to the holy city of Mecca, if they have the means to do so. The practice of *hajj* creates a place for Indonesian pilgrims to mix with and gain exposure to ideas from Muslims from all over the world. Scholars returning to Indonesia from Mecca and Medina share their knowledge and experiences with their community. These cities used to represent places of scholarly debate and exchange on religious activity, *Sufism*, and Islamic jurisprudence.<sup>5</sup>

However, after the al Saud family conquered Mecca and Medina, they promoted a narrow, exclusive version of Islamism. Three *hajjis* returning to Indonesia with a belief in *Wahhabi* doctrine triggered the so-called Padri war, a civil war among Muslims in West Sumatra. These men, Haji Miskin, Haji Abdurrahman, and Haji Muhammad Arif, were determined to purify Indonesian Islam and condemn the *Sufis*, using violence where necessary.<sup>6</sup> Their efforts ultimately failed because the ideology these men promoted contradicted the ideology, traditions, and culture of the Indonesian people.

*Wahhabis* continue to seek ways to export their ideology abroad. Ariev, Lukito, and Taylor describe how the *Wahhabi* influence spread throughout Indonesia. This description provides insight into the methods used by religious activists to spreads the radical ideology at the expense of Indonesian culture and tolerant forms of Islam. *Wahhabis* use various means to promote their version of strict Islam, including special schools in Indonesia, offering opportunity to study in Saudi Arabia, sending Islamist *imams*, and by providing direct funding support to radical groups.<sup>7</sup> They engage in infiltration of mosques, schools, government ministries, and moderate Muslim organizations to spread their brand of Islam and transform society.<sup>8</sup>

*Wahhabism* appears as the more prevalent doctrine spreading in Indonesia, which promotes a narrowly construed version of Islam with a claim to exclusive authority and superiority. The attraction of extremist ideology often results from a shallow understanding of religion. For example, Abu-Zayd describes *Wahhabis* as characterized by “restrictive, legalistic, monolithic, compulsory, and supremacist views.”<sup>9</sup> Radical Islamists employ this ideology in their construction of Islamism to suit their political purposes, and they justify their seizure of power by appropriating the mantle of religion. Ariev, et al., write that the ideology of Islamism formed within its narrow bounds of politics and beliefs to eliminate opposition and justify

political power.<sup>10</sup> This *Wahhabi* doctrine, which influenced the founders of JI, remains a threat to Indonesia.

Extremists, especially *Wahhabis*, seek to suppress or supplant local culture and tradition with a foreign Arab culture.<sup>11</sup> Extremists claim superiority over other Muslims, labeling others as less Islamic or even apostates. The primary strategy of transnational Islamist movements involves establishing, molding, and supporting local groups to serve as their accomplices in spreading the *Wahhabi* and *Salafi* ideologies while simultaneously working to destroy more tolerant forms of Islam.<sup>12</sup> Indonesian extremists and terror groups like JI employ and adapt *Wahhabi* and *Salafi* ideologies to justify violence and create a rift in the Muslim community based on their specific understanding of Islam.

Although the origins of JI remain clouded in a degree of secrecy, its roots likely extend to the group Darul Islam (DI) in Indonesia. Singh writes that there are four possible explanations of JI's formation, but based on interviews with former JI leaders, the leading theory became that the group formed as an offshoot of DI.<sup>13</sup> In 1945, the radical Muslim community joined Darul Islam, which sought to establish an Islamic state in Indonesia.<sup>14</sup> This movement originally opposed Dutch rule in the 1940s then moved underground in the early 1960s because of oppression under the Suharto government. By the mid-1990s, JI had developed an international presence in Indonesia, Malaysia, and elsewhere in South East Asia.<sup>15</sup> When the Suharto government fell in the late 1990's, the exiled leaders of JI returned to continue to pursue their goal to create an Islamic state in Indonesia.

JI's leaders, Abu Bakar Bashir and Abdullah Sungkar, preached a version of the Islamic faith influenced by groups like *Al-Qaeda*, which they learned during their fight against the Soviets in Afghanistan. Abu Bakar Bashir preached that Muslims could not treat Islam as merely

a religion, but that they must apply Islamic principles and values to all areas of human existence including government.<sup>16</sup> Bashir also argued that countries with Muslim majorities should be governed by *shari'a*.<sup>17</sup> Both of these issues represent common, mainstream Islamic doctrine, but JI advocated for the forcible imposition of these doctrines through violence, making the group both radical and militant. In the radicalization process, JI leaders spread their message and recruited in a variety of ways, using a mixture of Islamic preaching, education, and social and economic outreach. Bashir preached that Muslims have a duty to engage in a violent struggle whenever governments blocked the implementation of *shari'a*.<sup>18</sup> JI's leaders realized that spreading their ideology through *da'wa*, or proselytizing, without resorting to the use of force would most likely fail.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, Bashir's ideology and preaching repeatedly emphasized the use of force to advance the goals of Islam, including sacrificing oneself to promote or defend Islam.

These early leaders and members of JI served in Afghanistan fighting the Soviets, exposing them to Muslims with differing ideologies, including *Wahhabism* and *Salafism*. The ideology that these veterans adopted from the war constituted a re-interpretation of Islam for political gain, often through terrorism and political violence. The influence of *Wahhabi* and *Salafist* ideologies created conditions that linked JI to Islamist movements throughout the broader Middle East. The early leaders created JI as a carbon copy of *Al-Qaeda* in Indonesia and followed Usama bin Laden's guidance to seek an Islamic caliphate for Southeast Asia.<sup>20</sup> The leaders adopted violence as a means to achieve their goals through interactions with radicals and militants from throughout the Middle East and North Africa and through exposure to *Salafist* teachings.<sup>21</sup> Extreme violence later became a hallmark of JI's operations.

When followers of *Wahhabi* and *Salafi* doctrines seek political power in the name of Islam they become Islamist ideologies. Islamist ideologies contend that Islam and *shari'a* provide the solution to the world's problems. Ariev, et al., write that Islamist ideologies are not Islam because Islam itself lacks the characteristics of self-interest or politics.<sup>22</sup> Often with these two doctrines, people attach a connotation of radicalization or extremism to them. Ariev et al. argue that the violence in the name of Islam in the Middle East derives from the ideology of Islamism, not Islam the religion.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, JI's desire implement *shari'a* through violence in Indonesia results not from Islam itself but from the ideology of Islamism.

The Indonesian government has conducted a largely successful counter-terrorism campaign against JI since the mid-2000s. A Stratfor Global Intelligence report claims that JI has been weakened, after the government killed or captured most of their skilled planners and operatives.<sup>24</sup> Indonesian government efforts have marginalized the influence of Jemaah Islamiyah, and it has largely marginalized and splintered into other groups.<sup>25</sup> JI's fracture has led to groups like Jemaah Ansharut Touhid (JAT) and Mujahidin Indonesia Timur (MIT), which have links back to JI leadership.

Nevertheless, radical Islamism remains a risk because former JI leaders have now declared their loyalty to the Islamic State. Indonesia's large population aids the cause of the Islamic State; a small fraction of 200 million represents a large group of supporters and potential terrorists. A recent Pew poll claims that over 10 million Indonesians favor the IS cause.<sup>26</sup> According to Siktus Harson in December 2015, approximately 800 Indonesians have left to join IS in Syria.<sup>27</sup> As IS seeks to establish a caliphate in Indonesia, a small fraction of the Indonesian Muslim community supports the radical ideology. The Islamic State may provide new life to former JI operatives. Returning radicalized fighters now present a growing threat to Indonesia. In

addition to returning fighters, Indonesia's former anti-terrorism agency director claims that 16 different local radical groups have declared loyalty to IS and Abu Bakar Al-Baghdadi.<sup>28</sup>

Indonesia's philosophy of governance called *Pancasila* makes it unique among countries with a Muslim majority population because it advocates a pluralistic government, respectful of religion but not overtaken by it. *Pancasila* establishes the officially accepted political culture, embracing the principles of social justice; just and civilized humanity; belief in one God; Indonesian unity; and government by the will and consent of the people.<sup>29</sup> Their constitution and concept of *Pancasila* guarantee freedom of worship and reject the formation of a caliphate.<sup>30</sup> Islam fits within the structure of the Indonesian state, but does not seek to dominate as the political system.

The majority of Indonesia's Muslim population practices a moderate form of Islam, and approximately 70 million belong to the moderate Muslim organizations *Nahdlatul Ulama* or *Muhammadiyah*. These organizations encourage practicing Islam within the confines of the secular Indonesian state.<sup>31</sup> Many Indonesians value protecting their culture and traditions and celebrating diversity, and because of *Pancasila*, religion remains a spiritual matter instead of a political matter.

The constitution and the mainstream majority of the population indicate that Indonesians do not desire government-imposed *shari'a*. In a 2010 Pew study, only 33% of Indonesians identified with strict, literalist religious views, and only 14% of Muslims fit the label Islamist.<sup>32</sup> Islamic terror, however, requires support for *shari'a*. JI has tried to gain support to implement *shari'a* through *da'wa*, but their attempts at peaceful conversion have failed. As a result, the JI leaders felt forced to resort to violent methods, contrary to *Qur'anic* instructions concerning proselytizing. According to Ariev, Lukito, and Taylor, Islam demands that proselytizing, or

*da'wa*, occur in a manner consistent with the culture of the society, which explains why Indonesian Islam influenced by Pancasila can remain tolerant and pluralistic.<sup>33</sup> Indonesia's culture provides a strong counter-identity, and not just a counter-narrative to curbing extremism.<sup>34</sup> Even before JI, previous attempts at creating an Islamic state and implementing *shari'a* failed in Indonesia because those attempts ran counter to the culture.

The moderate belief system of many Indonesian Muslims can enable them to reject the need for an Islamic state or caliphate. This belief places them at odds with the radical factions present in their society. The influence of radical groups has created political pressure against the tradition of tolerance. Therefore, as JI uses violence to create an Islamic state, its ideology and methodology of violence contradict traditional Indonesian beliefs. Their use of violent tactics, such as high profile bombings including the Bali and the Ritz-Carlton/Marriott events, prove counterproductive because of high civilian casualty rates. Civilian casualties alienate the population rather than galvanizing support for their cause, leading to a population that cooperates with the security forces to provide intelligence and tips.<sup>35</sup>

Although the moderate Muslim organizations *Muhammadiyah* and *Nahdlatul Ulama* create pillars of support for Indonesia's government and reject an Islamic state, radicals continue attempts to infiltrate these organizations to gain power, influence, and a platform to spread their ideology. *Muhammadiyah* predominantly represents urban, modernist oriented Indonesians, while *Nahdlatul Ulama* appeals more to the rural population with a traditional and *Sufi* orientation.<sup>36</sup> Radical groups such as JI that adhere to *Wahhabi* beliefs reject *Sufism* as an innovation, or *bid'a*. *Wahhabism* forbids practices that Indonesian Muslims regard as basic parts of Islam including *Sufism*, veneration the saints, and prayers for the dead. *Wahhabis* also regard the pilgrimage to the tombs of the *Wali Songo* as being *shirk*, which means associating other

beings or powers with God.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, extremists face greater difficulty infiltrating *Nahdlatul Ulama* due to its *Sufi* orientation.<sup>38</sup> Islamists have found some success in infiltrating the moderate Islamic groups, who form one of the means to resist the spread of militant Islamism. These groups believe that education leads to a better approach to break the cycle of violence than security forces and military action.

Moderate Muslims also provide a platform for resisting the spread of extremist ideologies that seek to create Islamic states and implement *shari'a* by providing alternative teachings about what it means to be Muslim. *Nahdlatul Ulama* produced a video denouncing the extremist ideology of the Islamic State, promoting instead the message that Sunni Islam is a religion of love and compassion, and seeks the perfection of human nature.<sup>39</sup> *Sufism* forms an important component in the practice of Islam in Indonesia, and the *Sufi* mystics in Indonesia hold distinctly different views on *shari'a* than radicalized extremists. Most *Sufis* believe *shari'a* to be a path not a goal, with a common goal of being closer to God.<sup>40</sup> *Shari'a* provides not a single path, but many paths, leading to God.<sup>41</sup> Extremists outright reject *Sufism* and declare *Sufis* apostates for their beliefs. Extremists reject strategies of reform or contextualizing Islam and *shari'a* as deceptions employed by the enemies of Islam to prevent them from practicing *shari'a*.<sup>42</sup> Moderates will contend that individuals should strive to practice *shari'a* but governments need not enforce it. While the majority of Indonesia's Muslim population holds to moderate beliefs, the radicalized fraction still categorically rejects these moderate views in favor of a more puritanical approach usually deriving from *Wahhabi* or *Salafi* doctrine.

In addition to the conflict between JI's ideology and Indonesian values, the Indonesian government has created an effective, integrated police response and deradicalization program to undermine their political goals. The Indonesian government's approach to dealing with JI as a

radical Islamist terrorist organization owes its success to a combination of efforts. The Indonesian government has used both hard and soft approaches: the hard approach identifies, arrests, and prosecutes terrorists, and the soft approach involves changing mindsets.<sup>43</sup> This campaign has largely marginalized JI by removing its key leadership. Dr. Kirsten Schulze reports that as of 2008, there were 170 *jihadist* prisoners in Indonesian jails, comprised of Afghan veterans, JI members and individuals from smaller organizations.<sup>44</sup> By 2010, John Hughes reported that Indonesian authorities had captured over 300 terrorists and pursued legal action against them.<sup>45</sup> In addition to the successes of arrest and trials, the government developed a deradicalization program to turn former militants from radical Islam and to cooperate with officials. Another element of soft power used involved the police working with the people and local governments to identify Islamist preachers and “encouraging the local people to kick them out.”<sup>46</sup> They also closed boarding schools run by JI until they could replace Islamist teachers with moderates.<sup>47</sup> The Indonesian government supports the belief that effective counter-terrorism efforts require more than simply treating terrorism like a cancer that can be excised through the arrest or killing of individual terrorists.

The Indonesian government’s counter-terrorism strategy also couples sound intelligence techniques with criminal legal procedures. The Indonesian government formed Densus 88 (Den88) as a special counter-terrorism squad, and their operations have shown success in weakening the JI network. Den88 fights counter-terrorism through law enforcement rather than military means, relying on intelligence, investigation, and interrogation.<sup>48</sup> Their counter-terrorism strategy shows that policies do not have to resort to violating state sovereignty and deploying military personnel to these places.<sup>49</sup>

Indonesia's anti-terror program operates on a largely self-sufficient basis without any American footprint. Indonesia collaborated with the United States and Australia for counter-terrorism training, which has led to the death or capture of many of JI's leaders.<sup>50</sup> The United States has not put boots on the ground, nor has Indonesia asked the United States for direct support.<sup>51</sup> The emphasis on capturing and trying terrorists as criminals provides the benefits of counter-messaging through a deradicalization program and intelligence gathering about the terror networks themselves.

Counter-radicalization and deradicalization form one of the unique elements of the Indonesian government's approach to stopping terrorism, with roles for both moderate Muslims and former radicals to play. In Indonesia, the government exploited a rift in JI's leadership concerning the ideology of suicide bombing tactics, leading to the opportunity for reformed radicals to provide a counter argument to radicals. Dr. Schulze provides a description of how the rehabilitation process seeks to achieve deradicalization in Indonesia. She writes that the Indonesian rehabilitation program to counter militant Islamism rests on two key premises: the belief that radicals will only listen to other radicals and, that through kindness, the police can alter the *jihadist* assumption that government officials are by definition anti-Islamic.<sup>52</sup> She continues that JI sees the Indonesian government to be *kafir*, or unbelievers. However, the police believed they could overcome inherent distrust, leading to prisoners accepting police assistance.<sup>53</sup> The police believed that once a bond of trust forms, they might be able to get prisoners to question other deeply held *jihadist* tenets.<sup>54</sup>

Indonesia's arguably highest profile reformed radical was Nasir Abbas, a former leader of JI who helped the police to find militants willing to cooperate with the police. Abbas disagreed with other JI leaders over the practices of suicide bombings and attacking civilians. Dr.

Schulze highlights how the Indonesian government used Nasir Abbas to provide the deradicalization message. The government's deradicalization program focused on the terrorism and civilian bombings as a deviation from defensive *jihad*, attempting to change the *jihadist* mindset about killing of civilians and the “need” for the Islamic state.<sup>55</sup> Abbas, a reformed Islamist, seeks to show the radicals that the *ulama*, or Islamic scholars, do not desire an Islamic State because the Prophet Muhammad never established a state. He argues that Jemaah Islamiyah’s bombing of civilians has corrupted their struggle.<sup>56</sup> Abbas says that politics and power, not religion, drive the struggle for an Islamic state.<sup>57</sup> A blended solution to combating Islamist terrorism works within Indonesia’s unique culture because the people distinguish Islam the religion from Islamism as a system of governance. This distinction allows the Indonesian people to largely reject extremist views and sometimes moderate a radical’s view on violent *jihad* or on the need to establish an Islamic state.

Reforming radicals helps the government to spread a new message; however, the Indonesian government’s program does contain a few gaps. The successes of the Indonesian counter-terrorism approach include imprisonment of Abu Bakar Bashir, JI’s spiritual leader and later the founder of JAT, and the intelligence gained from capturing rather than killing suspected terrorists. However, the program still lacks elements designed to prevent recidivism. Dr. Schulze believes that the challenges with this deradicalization system come from radical efforts to discredit those who cooperate with the police.<sup>58</sup> The lack of a structured rehabilitation program remains potentially more disconcerting. Without such a program, released prisoners will likely return to the *jihadist* communities from whence they came. The lack of money and skills leave them few options but to return to the familiar, re-exposing them to radical and militant ideas. If the police fail to deliver on promises made for assistance post-release, then the militants face

pressure to return to the terrorist organization and lack incentives to continue to share information with the police.<sup>59</sup>

### Prospects for Using Lessons Learned

The Indonesian government would face challenges exporting its model for combating JI and terrorism to the Middle East and North Africa due to the differences in culture and interpretation of Islam. Exporting any model to combat terrorism would likely meet resistance on three distinct levels within society: at the government level, between religious scholars, and at a grass-roots level for the mass populace. First, areas formerly called Iraq and Syria currently lack governments with any ability to deliver common goods and services or provide effective governance to their people. This inability to effectively govern and provide security within the state borders precludes governments from instituting the necessary form of police and intelligence campaign. Such campaigns would provide an effective means to arrest, try, convict, and incarcerate terrorists as criminals.

In countries with stronger governance, like Saudi Arabia with a capable police force, the prevalence of *Wahhabi* doctrine promoted by the royal family precludes change. In Saudi Arabia, *Wahhabis* have effectively silenced all opposition to their teaching; therefore, any repudiation of *Wahhabi* ideology occurs only in locations free of *Wahhabi* control.<sup>60</sup> Second, any attempt to send Indonesian Islamic scholars to the Middle East to preach a tolerant version of Islam would face the similar problems. The Saudi *imams* fiercely reject any teaching contrary to their own doctrine because of *Wahhabism*'s narrow interpretation. The elitism and claims to superiority of the Saudi doctrine renders it almost impervious to change or outside influence from moderate Muslims. Proselytizing also becomes unlikely in this environment. Barzegar and Powers write, "Ideologies are embedded into social systems, and research shows that the

introduction of information contrary to foundational ideological tenants will trigger a hardening of thinking rather than transformation.”<sup>61</sup>

Finally, the mass populace in some Middle Eastern nations lacks the tolerance and pluralistic view of Indonesians that would allow a countering viewpoint to Islamist doctrines to emerge. The way in which Islam spread in Indonesia and the way people incorporated Islam into Indonesian culture created unique conditions, not found in most Middle Eastern countries. Indonesia’s unique culture allowed the government to challenge JI with a successful counter-terrorism plan that included a deradicalization element in addition to police and intelligence work.

Cultures and the practice of Islam do vary throughout North Africa and the Middle East, even though doctrines of intolerance exist. Not all Muslims in these regions follow *Wahhabi* or *Salafi* doctrines nor do they all possess radical beliefs. Elements of the Indonesian government’s approach to counter-terrorism and JI may influence possible courses of action in Middle Eastern states such as Jordan where *Wahhabi* and *Salafi* doctrines are not as entrenched as in Saudi Arabia. Elements of the Indonesian government’s approach could prove useful in parts of North Africa, including Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco. After the military coup in Egypt, the President Sisi’s government has adopted an antagonistic position toward the Muslim Brotherhood, which may lead to opportunities for influence and outreach to moderate Muslim governments.

In cases where the Indonesian government cannot conduct direct outreach, Muslim non-governmental organizations may offer an alternative means to promote tolerance and support moderate factions of societies. Non-governmental organizations also can act in humanitarian crises, spreading their message concurrently as they meet the physical needs of those affected by the disaster. Finally, the Indonesian government could sponsor exchanges of moderate Islamic

teachers and scholars, promoting the spread of tolerant principles when scholars return to their community. Supportive political conditions in parts of North Africa and the Middle East remain a key barrier to export the Indonesian model of resistance to radicalism; however, political conditions can change, leading to opportunities to promote tolerance and societal change.



Endnotes: All notes appear in shortened form. For full details, see the appropriate entry in the bibliography.

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4. *Ibid.*, ix.
5. Hodri Ariev, Ratno Lukito, and C. Holland Taylor, *The Illusion of an Islamic State*, 2011, 73.
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7. C. Holland Taylor preface to Hodri Ariev, Ratno Lukito, and C. Holland Taylor, *The Illusion of an Islamic State*, 2011, x.
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12. *Ibid.*, 39.
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23. *Ibid.*, 208.
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33. Derived from *Qur'an 14:14* as quoted in Hodri Ariev, Ratno Lukito, and C. Holland Taylor, *The Illusion of an Islamic State*, 2011, 161.
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